No. III. (NEW) 1823. (SERIES) SEPT. 8.

THE MIRROR OF THE STAGE

OR,

New Dramatic Censor;

CONSISTING OF

ORIGINAL MEMOIRS OF THE PRINCIPAL ACTORS,

CRITICISMS

ON THE

NEW PIECES AND PERFORMERS;

ANECDOTES, ORIGINAL ESSAYS,

&c. &c. &c.

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Embellished with an elegant engraved Portrait of

Mr. MATHEWS, as MONSIEUR MORBLEU,

In "MONSIEUR TONSON."

LONDON:

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

To the enquiries of DRAMATICUS, why W. CHAPMAN does not appear so often as formerly, we answer,—That he is not the only actor whose *Modesty* keeps him in the back ground.

We are sorry we cannot answer the Query of MODERATOR: we were not present, and consequently cannot say whether the *squalls* of *Christmas* disturbed the serenity of a gay widow at a summer-house on Monday last:—but we happen to know that *she felt* the severity *of the* "war of elements" on leaving the house.

The evil mentioned by V.— is as notorious as the talents of Mr. W. BARRYMORE, or the *natural* and *unaffected* acting of Miss HOLDAWAY.

ERRATA.

No. 2. p. 21.—LINES to MISS POVEY

For "Fancy's *horn*,"—read, "Fancy's HOUR."

——"rural beauties *flow*," read "beauties GLOW.

THE

Mirror of the Stage;

OR,

NEW DRAMATIC CENSOR.

"To hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature;
To show virtue her own feature; scorn her own image;
And the very age and body o' th' times its form and pressure."

No. 3.] MONDAY, SEPT. 8th, 1823. [Vol. III.

MEMOIR OF MR. MATHEWS.

THE life of this gentleman has been so recently, and so humorously told by himself, that we are under some little apprehension the mere recital of dates and circumstances, which we are only able to give, will sound as dull to the ear "as a thrice told tale."

Mr. Mathews is the son of Mr. Mathews, bookseller, in the Strand, and was born June 28, 1776.

At the age of fourteen, he was regularly bound apprentice to his father; and, as proposed, intended to pursue his business. He, however, continued at school till seventeen; during this time he took a great dislike to trade, and imbibed a very strong partiality for the stage. It is remarkable, that at this time he had not seen a play, but contracted his *penchant* merely by reading them, and associating with young men, his school-fellows, who gave him warm and gratifying descriptions of the effect produced on them by theatrical representations. His father, from religious motives, did not suffer his children to visit the theatres.

About this time our stage-struck hero went to an evening French school, Private plays were proposed, and he eagerly joined in the wish of the other scholars, that they should be put into practice. *The Distressed Mother* was the first performance, and at a pastry-cook's shop in the Strand, up one pair of stairs, he made his *debut* in the humble character of *Phœnix*; Mr. Elliston made his first appearance the same night in *Pyrrhus*.

The ensuing winter he played the *Chaplain* in '*The Orphan*,' and *Mr. Lovel* in '*A Quarter of an Hour before Dinner*. His father's servant, who witnessed his performance, having said, "that he liked young master the best among them," Mathews thought it a presage of his future greatness, and he secretly determined to make the stage his profession.

In the year 1790, he saw '*The Orphan*' and '*Retaliation*' at Covent-Garden, which was the first public performance he ever visited: this fanned the flame, and every play that he afterwards saw added fresh fuel to the fire. That inimitable comedian, Parsons, was however his idol; and from his admiration of him, at the age of fourteen, he resolved on the study of old men. He shortly after played *Old Doiley*, which determined him to consider that his forte, and to this hour he prefers that line of acting to any other.

In the winter of 1793, he made his

first public appearance at Richmond, in the characters of *Richmond* and *Bowkitt*.

In March 1794, he played the former characters, and *Old Doiley*, at Canterbury. The success he fancied he met with, made him determine to engage as soon as possible. At this time, the agent of Mr. Daly, the Irish manager, being in town, he waited on him, and with the promise of playing low comedy characters, he was engaged.

Mr. Mathews made his *entrè* in Dublin on the 19th of June, 1794, in *Jacob Gawky* and *Lingo;* his success appeared to him very great; his songs in the farce were all *encored*, and he repeated the character that day s'ennight: however, Mr. Daly wanted a younker to play what are theatrically termed *walking gentlemen*, and this being the line he had allotted him before his appearance, his success in another line had no no weight with him, consequently his first part was *Lamp* in '*Wild Oats*.'—From this time he played *Beaufort* in '*The Citizen*,' *Paris* in '*Romeo*,' *Albany* in '*King Lear*,' &c. After suffering every misery under the management of a man, whose name was a terror to actors, for eighteen months, he quitted him, meaning to return to London; but having left Cork for Bristol, he was put into Wales by contrary winds. Here by chance he saw a play at Swansea—proposed to perform—opened in *Lingo*, (October, 1795)—succeeded—was engaged—and staid three years with Mr. Masterman, the worthy manager of the Swansea, Carmarthen, Monmouth, Cardiff, &c. theatres. During this time he played the whole of the principal low comedy.

On Mr. Emery being engaged at Covent-Garden, he applied to the late Mr. Wilkinson, the York manager, offering himself as a low comedian:—"Low comedian," said Mr. Wilkinson, looking at our *tall* hero:—"Yes, sir, low comedian."—"Well, I see you have comic abilities—so enough, if you please—you may spare your ludicrous faces for the present." Mr. Wilkinson, however, soon found his mistake, as Mr. Mathews cannot avoid twisting his mouth. He came out on the York boards, in 1798, in *Silky* and *Lingo*, and remained in the company till 1803, being a great favourite. He was then engaged at the Haymarket, where he made his first appearance in *Jabal* and *Lingo*. Of this theatre he soon became the hero in the comic line.

At the close of the season, Mr. M. joined the Drury-lane company, where he played principal characters until that theatre was consumed by fire. When the Lyceum opened, Mr. M. still retained his situation amongst his burnt-out brethren—and again played at the new Drury-lane theatre; but in consequence of a dispute with the sub-committee, he left that theatre, and on the following year was engaged at Covent-Garden, where he made his first appearance as *Buskin*, in '*Killing no Murder*:' his success was pre-eminent. Here, however, he considered himself unjustly kept back in his profession, and he consequently left that theatre. It was at this period—1816, we believe—that he first formed the idea of the performance which has been so highly praised under the designation of '*At Home*.' This, in conjunction with Mr. ARNOLD, he has carried on until 1822, with great success, and profit to both parties.

Mr. M. during the last year, took a trip to America; an account of which tour, report says, will form the subject of a new entertainment in February next.

BILLY BUFFON AND MRS. CHATTERLEY.

To the Editor of 'The Mirror of the Stage.'

SIR—I am a great admirer of beauty; even where my own judgment may not hit a face divine, it is inclined to take a few charms upon trust from the report of others. Perhaps I think higher of any opinion than my own; however, that is not so much the case.—There is

a lady—(heaven forbid that I should be imagined to make a *dead set* at any one)—but whom I have particularly remarked as being 'point device' in millinery ornament, great plenitude of muslin ruffle, &c. and who, I am inclined to think, makes a train the *ne plus ultra* of stage effect.—'Fine feathers,' says the old proverb—and we must all admit its truth; but Thomson justly remarks, that where nature has been most bountiful in plumage, she 'humbles in song'.—The same over-degree of ornament in the instance of an actor or actress, may be the occasion of the same poverty of more intrinsic worth. I admire, Sir, Mrs. CHATTERLEY as a most lady-like actress—though her precision of movement and *hauteur* are rather aristocratic—something like what we would expect to meet with in the lady of a staunch ministerial ambassador; refined, yet chilly—courtly, yet unbending. Any one, Sir, that has passed through Clare-court, must allow the supernumerary charm that sallad borrows from the tasteful devotion of Mr. Johnson, at his à-là-mode beef repository. A satin gown, an *aigrette*, or veil, receives equal splendour from the manner in which Mrs. CHATTERLEY bestows it. With her enter the last new fashions from the west:—the stage is made an elegant shew-room. This is all very well, and I do not quarrel with it; but, Sir, in all that I have observed or read, I have ever been given to understand that an African damsel is not 'white as a smock,' but dipped brown or black, according to her kin. I had the misfortune to see Mrs. CHATTERLEY in *Berissa*, in '*The Africans*.'—Now, her papa was a comely, dingy old gentleman enough; but his daughter displayed 'pure red and white co-mingling in her cheeks.' Doubtless Mrs. CHATTERLEY thought that such 'fair paper' was *not* made for a tincture of brown. Each to his opinion:—to me it looked most ridiculous. Every one dyed, that they looked as *Augustus Mug* said, 'like chess-men when the game was up;' and yet a *fair* lady was sighing among the groupe, and talking of her native Africa, and her dear nut-brown father. I am aware, Sir, that complexion is no inconsiderable article in the stock of female beauties; but the snow of Mrs. C.'s countenance is not of so delicate a constitution as the 'snow of Evelyn's fame;' it would have glowed in pristine beauty at the next morning's breakfast table, and equally delighted in the evening at the Haymarket. I know not, Sir, how the forfeit-book may affect the 'principal performers;' but I know, that if a more humble individual is not (when deemed requisite) as red as the red lion, or as black as the devil,—pop he goes on the prompter's list; and Saturday morning whispers more of the business. However, humbly soliciting, in the name of nature and of taste, that Mrs. CHATTERLEY, or any other lady, when designed to represent a *Foulah*, or a *Mandango*, will not look as though she had come from an airing off Hampstead Heath, or Highgate Hill,

I remain, with every due acknowledgment of much merit,

BILLY BUFFON.

Literary Review.

DON JUAN,—Cantos IX. X. XI.

Another opportunity is given; hireling scribes, well-fleshed pensioners, treasury dormice, all 'the vast and many' hangers-on, 'being *beaten* will speak.'—All raise the hue at each succeeding publication; the wordy war begins, and Lord Byron is eternally lost to every sense of policy and feeling in his forgetfulness that 'the *truth* should not at all times be spoken.'—But thanks to the Earl of ELDON, the 'Daniel come to judge.' *Don Juan* receives, if possible, new notoriety from the

sapient dicta of the *patronising* Justice, who thinks that the fact that

"Though Ireland starve, great George weighs twenty stone,"—

should, by every possible means, be circulated without any drawback from pocket or condition.—We think Mr. Dugdale, the WORTHY *pirate* of *Don Juan*, entertained a most amiable opinion of judicial intellect, when his only hope was *to* PROVE the work as immoral, blasphemous, and, above all, disloyal, in order to gain the approbation of the Bench for another source to send it to the world. What feeling decided the question we cannot determine;—it forms one of those riddles in which *great men* sometimes choose to envelope themselves; but the true meaning of which is, perhaps, if there be any at all, like *Gratiano's* grains of wheat.

LORD BYRON has truly said—

"Why do they call me Misanthrope?—Because
They hate me, not I them."—

He that strips power and rank of the dirty tinsel that dresses it, the painted sign-posts—tyranny and despotism,—that proves, because a head may wear a crown it is no argument it bears brains, or that glittering stars hold company with hearts; he that preaches a crusade in terms that *all* may know, against crushing power, and the vast engines that a few madmen and idiots would employ for the subversion of the best rights of existence;—he that makes men think,—that tells them what they are, and then shews the "mousing owls" in their true feather;—why he, of course, is Ambition's bane. —She lets loose her mongrels on her foe, that bark and clatter, whilst the lion smiles!—We regret our limits prevent us from speaking further on this subject, for it is a theme on which man's *natural* feelings must dilate and must honor. As a work of *poetry*, it cannot be named with the first five cantos: —in fact, its direction renders it impossible. There are no such scenes to descant on as 'the silent ocean and the star-light bay,' the Muse now jostles with official coxcombs and gartered nothings.—The philosopher, however, frequently breaks forth, and in the midst of the *coterie* or *waltz*, or Secretary's office, calls one into a corner to meditation's treat.

My Lord Wellington has here some home truths, which a Westminster-Abbey emblazonment will but weakly combat against.—

Oh, Wellington! (or "Vilainton—for Fame
Sounds the heroic syllables both ways;
France could not even conquer your great name,
But punned it down to this facetious phrase—
Beating or beaten she will laugh the same)
You have obtained great pensions and much praise;
Glory like yours should any dare gainsay,
Humanity would rise, and thunder "Nay!"*

Though Britain owes (and pays you too) so much,
Yet Europe doubtless owes you greatly more:
You have repaired Legitimacy's crutch,
A prop not quite so certain as before:
The Spanish, and the French as well as Dutch,
Have seen, and felt, how strongly you *restore;*
And Waterloo has made the world your debtor
(I wish your bards would sing it rather better.)

I am no flatterer—you've supped full of flattery:
They say you like it too—'tis no great wonder:
He whose whole life has been assault and battery,
At last may get a little tired of thunder;
And swallowing eulogy much more than satire, he

* Query—*Nay?*—Printer's devil.

May like being praised for every lucky blunder
Called "Saviour of the Nations"—not yet saved,
And Europe's Liberator—still enslaved.
Never had mortal man such opportunity,
Except Napoleon, or abused it more:
You might have freed fallen Europe from the unity
Of Tyrants, and been blest from shore to shore:
And *now*—What *is* your fame? Shall the muse tune it ye?
Now—that the rabble's first vain shouts are o'er?
Go! hear it in your famished country's cries!
Behold the World! and curse your victories!

Speaking of a new creation, with the *probable* disinterment of George the Fourth,—he says—

Think if then George the Fourth should be dug up!
How the new worldlings of the then new East
Will wonder where such animals could sup!
(For they themselves will be but of the least:
Even worlds miscarry, when too oft they pup,
And every new Creation hath decreased
In size, from overworking the material—
Men are but maggots of some huge Earth's burial.)

Be it understood, we are no professed railers against royalty, although philosophy and a moment's reflection of what we all are must laugh or sigh at the vast height flesh jumps above flesh. But when *Legitimacy* indulges in 'blood, and sweat, and pain,' it is a proud effort of genius to tell the loud truth, and fearlessly to speak out what is—to teach men that they are such,—to engender impulse, and endow contempt!

Don Juan has done more for true reason and the natural interests of humanity than any work published in the last half century. May Lord Byron ever continue, as he now does, 'the moon undisturbed by the howl of wolves.'

Dramatic Sketcher, No. 1.

EUGENIO.——ISABEL.

Eug. You say you love not Marco; much I fear
Some idle passion must possess your heart.
What can you urge against him? he is brave;
The tongue of fame is busy in his praise.
Speak to me, child, resolve at once my doubts,
And end uncertainty.

Isabel. Alas! I cannot;
I dread to call a father's anger down,
Oh! 'tis a fearful thing to feel a curse,
A parent's curse, suspended o'er one's head.
Each moment of thy life, by sad despair
And grief embitter'd,—at pale night's approach,
To press a sleepless pillow; each long hour,
By harrowing memory still longer made;
Or if, perchance, our sorrowing frame for one,
One little moment cheats in welcome sleep
A short remembrance of our dire affliction,
Still by one frightful dream pursued to wake,
Ere morn's approach, again to agony;
Still to con o'er the never varying theme;
To fancy still repeated the dread word,
The fatal spell, a parent's malediction:—
"Wretch that thou art, expect not hope nor peace,
"'Tis fled from thee for ever; still live on,
"A fated victim to thy blighted hopes.
"Tell o'er the bitter remnant of thy days.
"In chilling misery, kind hope no more
"An inmate of thy breast;—for lo! a curse,
"A father's malediction is upon thee."
This, this indeed is terrible.

Eug. Nay, come,
I meant not this, say, why anticipate

A fate I trust far distant. But Marco—

Isabel. True, he is brave, wise,—generous—all but

Eug. But! heaven help me!—Sure the fairer sex,
Term'd falsely weaker,—weaker! by my soul!
We have our swords, of conquests honour prate,
And with all these are vanquished.—Ladies wield
Their surer weapons, with such wond'rous art
Dispose their forces, range their ifs and buts
With skill so rare, marshal their regiments
Of arguments, their blushes, or their tears,
With tact so sure,—such veteran nicety,
That heroes vanquish'd at their feet repose,
And warriors sue with one kind smile disarm'd.
Come then, since truly I've confess'd your power,
For once, fair lady, be sincere, nor seek
To veil the truth.

Isabel. I've granted he is brave;
But then so rough,—uncourteous,—so unpolish'd.—
In tented field the loud and stern command
May bravely sound; but sure some gentler bearings,
Or some courtlier guise—

Eug. Would please thee better:
Thou art frank at last. Tush! now, I warrant me,
Some tender milk-sop,—or some precious compound
Of sympathy and sighs, of sentiment
And pathos, compliment and vanity,
Would suit thee better far:—his face, forsooth,
Fair as the lily, nor his front brown'd o'er
By eastern suns. One who could talk of war,
Of sieges, battles won, right gallantly,
Yet ne'er had faced in war his country's foes,
Or quitted Albion's shores, unless to make
The necessary tour, which qualifies
Our moderns to the name of gentlemen,
Giving them license boldly to put forth
Their idle nothings, and look down with scorn
On honest citizens. Wonderment must cease,
That men so oft will sink their dignity,
And squeak like some school-Miss the measur'd phrase,
Finding it is a necessary evil—
A passport to our wives, and daughters' favors.—

Isabel. Nay, you mistake:—what shall I say, my father,
To bring conviction to you?—I ask not
The thing you have described,—(the ideal and being
Of your mind's creation) still, I must own,
There is a certain condescension due
To woman-kind. The voice which loudly hurls
A proud defiance to his prouder foe,
And thunders vengeance down, that voice should melt,
When suing woman's love, in gentler accents,
Courting in softer tone, one smile, and adding
A double value to the tale it breathes.

Eug. Why, what? Isabel, now then I find
One prejudice in favour of another,
And being a mortal of Apollo's grace,
Minerva's wisdom, Alexander's power,
He is uncouth in manners,—hideous
As triple-headed Cerberus,—well,—well!
Don't turn aside, girl, you may spare your blushes;
The boy is brave, and since ye thus incline
Your heart, confessing he can whisper love,
Mark me, in "COURTLIER GUISE" than Marco,
E'en have him, be contented, and be happy!

Theatrical Diary.

THE HAYMARKET.

August 22d, Seeing is Believing, Sweethearts and Wives, Family Jars—23d, Sweethearts and Wives, Mrs. Smith, A Roland for an Oliver—25th, Matrimony, Sweethearts and Wives, Killing no Murder—26th, Matrimony, Young Quaker, Fish out of Water, first time—27th, Sweethearts and Wives, Match-Making, Fish out of Water—28th, Match-Making, Barber of Seville, Fish out of Water—29th, Matrimony, Sweethearts and Wives, Fish out of Water—30th, A Roland for an Oliver, Pigeons and Crows, Fish out of Water.—September 1st, Matrimony, Sweethearts and Wives, Fish out of Water—2nd, Match-Making, Sweethearts and Wives, Fish out of Water—3d, Matrimony, Sweethearts and Wives, Fish out of Water—4th, Young Quaker, Mrs. Smith, Gay Deceiver—5th, Twelve Precisely, Sweethearts and Wives, Fish out of Water.

'*Fish out of Water*,' a farce, produced on Monday week, has been deservedly successful.—It is a translation by the author of '*Family Jars*;' but evidently superior in every point from that production. The incidents are as follow:—

Sir George Courtly being appointed as ambassador to the Court of Denmark, has two situations to be filled in his suite, one open to a secretary and the other to a cook. *Sir George* has a daughter, and love, the usual masquerader, urges *Charles*, the son of *Alderman Gayfair*, to apply for the former place, in order that he might accompany his lady love to Copenhagen. This of course is objected to by his father, who happens to be an old acquaintance of the ambassador; and he waits upon the steward, requesting him to detain the applicant for the secretaryship until he (Alderman) shall again arrive. In the mean time, *Emma*, the smitten lady, interests herself with the steward, that he may engage the gentleman she expects, as secretary. *Samuel Savoury*, a discarded cook of *Alderman Gayfair*, at this instant applies to "rule the roast;" but who is misinterpreted by the steward, who, much to *Samuel's* surprise and embarrassment, instantly instals him as secretary, imagining him to be the person whom *Emma* has mentioned.—*Charles* makes application; but finding all disposed of but the cook's birth, even takes that.—He is desired to make a cup of chocolate for his first piece of service, his awkwardness at which so works upon *Sam. Savoury*, that he, in professional contempt at his stupidity, proposes to make the chocolate himself, leaving an official letter to be written by *Charles*, which he executes with so much elegance, as to draw the greatest consideration from the ambassador towards the supposed erudite *Samuel Savoury*, yet unseen by his excellency. An interview, however, between *Sir George* and *Samuel*, brings on the ex-cook's disgrace and expulsion. The mistake is cleared up by *Alderman Gayfair's* meeting his son, who gains the lady, and *Samuel* enters with the dinner, having exercised, since his turn out from the library, his legitimate functions in the kitchen.

Ancient poets invoked '*the Muses nine*,' —all farce-writers should ask LISTON *unique*. It is impossible to describe his acting in this piece:—there was the vanity of the culinary scholar, and the confident, questioning stare of quibbling experience. Astley Cooper, or '*the gentle Abernethy*,' could not be more professionally important, more cool, collected, closed up in an opinion made '*confirmation strong*' by ancient practice, in the examination of a Galenic candidate, than was LISTON in his sententious enquiry of '*how to make a dish of pheasants à là braise?*'—his visage relaxing into an acquiescence of *hauteur* at the answer of his scholar—"with ham"—raised the *spirit* of laughter through the whole house. It was not contortion, it was *mind*, and shewed the principle of self-valuation is the

same in the first man of the kitchen as the first of a senate.

VINING had scarcely any thing to do; therefore was as light as nothing can be. '*Strengthening the piece*' we imagine to have been the only reason for introducing him in it. POPE, as the *Ambassador*, was the diplomatist built upon the gentleman:—even his smile was *official*. WILLIAMS was as sleek in the *Steward*, as servants with an eye to business generally are:—a slipping, smirking knave, whose very attentions are expensive—every bow a dollar. Much has been said of civic physiognomy: it has likewise been observed, that 'a nation's welfare' can be 'read in the eyes' of its inhabitants. If this be true, poor England,—judging from *Alderman Gayfair's* (Mr. YOUNGER) countenance, she may be in 'good case'—but not fat, ruddy contentment:—it is techiness grown plethoric, or vapours dropsical.—Mr. Y. appeared, from the map-like lines in his visage, as though he was suffering from the discordant sound of sharpening saws, or untrimmed waggon-wheels.

Miss LOVE's beautiful execution of three songs, was like 'putting good meat into an unclean dish.' It really vexed us, that we could not sufficiently recover ourselves from the persecuting humour of LISTON, to pay that homage to fine music, which it ought in *any place* to inspire:—but we could not;—laughter was in aberration, and mocked the reclaiming powers of harmony: it was bad taste that ordered this.—Mrs. C. JONES was another of the cyphers added to the Great 1;—she did nothing but assist in a duet, the intrusion of which was something like the mal-a-propos rencontre with a lovely fair, whose appearance *must* delay one. And where's compulsion's pleasure?

The piece was eminently successful;—it abounds with no great flashes of wit: one or two slips, 'brief as the lightning in the collier night,' gave good opportunity to industrious supporters. LISTON gave it out for repetition, and who could say—"No!"

ENGLISH OPERA HOUSE.

***August** 22d, La Diligence, Monsieur Tonson, Miller's Maid—23d, La Diligence, Monsieur Tonson, Presumption—25th, Day at an Inn, Monsieur Tonson, Presumption—26th, Bee Hive, Monsieur Tonson, Free and Easy—27th, Too Curious by Half, (first time) Gretna Green, Presumption—28th, Highland Reel, Too Curious by Half, Day at an Inn—29th, Too Curious by Half, Promissory Note, Presumption—30th, Bee Hive, Too Curious by Half, Monsieur Tonson.—September 1st, Guardians Outwitted, (first time) Too Curious by Half, Monsieur Tonson—2nd, Guardians Outwitted, Too Curious by Half, Bee Hive—3d, Miller's Maid, I will Have a Wife, Presumption—4th, Guardians Outwitted, Too Curious by Half, Monsieur Tonson—5th, Youthful Days of Gil Blas, My Aunt, Gordon the Gypsey.*

The monopologue called '*La Diligence*,' has been sustained by MATHEWS with unequalled ability—the changes of voice and manner in characters so directly in their components opposed to each other, were executed with the same truth and warmth of colouring, for which this gentleman has been so long celebrated.

The farce of '*Killing no Murder*' has been altered, and under the title of '*A Day at an Inn*,' was played as a one-act piece,—MATHEWS performing his original character of *Buskin* with great

spirit. This afterpiece is decidedly HOOKE's best production, and owed its success to the character of *Apollo Belvi*, which LISTON personated with irresistible drollery: though we consider it never could be played with such effect by any other than LISTON, yet we very much regret the part was not retained in the present piece: we should like to have seen WILKINSON play it, and we have no doubt it would have been a successful *hit*.

An operatic entertainment, in two acts, founded on Mrs. CENTLIVRE's sequel to the *Busy Body*, has been added to the list of new pieces—it is named, '*Too Curious by Half, or Marplot in Spain;*' and, as its title indicates, is a continuation of the adventures of that mischievously inquisitive personage. WRENCH threw a great deal of bustle and animation into his acting as *Marplot;* but with all his merit (and he certainly displayed much) he is not the sort of actor calculated to make the character tell.—HARLEY is, perhaps, the only man on the stage who could play it well—there is a perpetual restlessness, an endless volatility of mind and person about him, so exactly in unison with the part.—As an opera, the piece has very trifling claims upon our attention; in fact, it can only be considered as a transplanting of the characters to a different soil: there has been some little ingenuity aimed at in the production of the *novel* incident of ducking a man in a fountain of *dirty* water:—this is poetic license with a vengeance. The music is characteristic and pleasing, (where it is original,) and in the overture, there are some animated boleros introduced, which have a good effect.

Though we are no very great admirers of the system of cutting down our best Comedies to make them bearable Operas, yet the occasion which gave rise to the mutilation of *A Bold Stroke for a Wife* justifies the "scotching" in this instance." Unhappily the extent of privilege granted by the Lord Chamberlain to this house, compels the manager to introduce a certain number of songs in all pieces produced, and limits their performance to a certain time;—from these causes, therefore, we had presented to us a new skeleton of a good subject, consequently, as we have much compassion for all *deformed* creatures, we shall not on this occasion exercise the duties of our office

MATHEWS was the very life and soul of the piece: his *Colonel Feignwell*, though it must yield to that of BANNISTER or ELLISTON, is yet a performance of great merit:—his personation of the Dutchman, with a name as long as the cable of a man of war, was highly humorous; it had a certain *nationality* about it which could not be mistaken.—The old steward *Pillage*, was also given most admirably.—The garrulity and feebleness of 'second childishness' were hit off to the very life. It would be unjust to omit Miss KELLY's *Ann Lovely*, which was, as is usual with this fascinating actress, all that the imagination could desire.

SURREY THEATRE.

We must compliment the present proprietor on his praiseworthy exertions, in rendering this ancient place of amusement far superior in point of decoration to any minor, and equal to the patent, theatres: in fact, there is ornament even to profusion: the scenery, without exception, as beautiful as we have ever witnessed; and the dresses

vying with the most splendid wardrobe. So much to Mr. WILLIAMS; whose judgment, likewise, was never more fortunate than in the selection of Mr. SMITH for his stage manager: under this gentleman's guidance, every thing partakes of the most tenacious precision as to place, time, and circumstance; we have no cottage cupboards flanking a wood—nor rocks in bedchambers—a moon does not go her course in two seconds, nor the foot lights up in a dark scene; but every thing is adapted to render the illusion as strong as art can make it.

'*Humgumption*,' a very clever parody of the very silly opera '*Presumption*,' has been brought forward; but we fear the latter piece has not attained sufficient notoriety requisite for the universal understanding of the burlesque, which abounds in humourous situation and satiric ability. SMITH, as the *Idiot*, is indeed excellent, vacancy personified. Mr. WATKINS BURROUGHS, as *Doctor Frankenstein*, is really clever—his pompous imitation of WALLACK, in the speculating student, was chaste and severe. BUCKINGHAM is a clever man in any thing—his 'nervous' hair-dresser was happy. GALLOT played a wooing cobler, and was *St. Crispin's* legitimate follower. Miss TUNSTALL sung some sweet music, and Miss BENCE played up in *Mrs. Friz*.

'*Antigone*' followed: Now, be it understood, we do not object to morality being disseminated; but folks may, from the blessed exertions of bustling christians, who contract with printers to save souls by the hundred, have moral tracts put into their hands *gratis;* they may receive 'soul's purgation' at the corner of every street from the liberality of other 'Societies;' then, why does the author of '*Antigone*' bring HIS maxims to sell when the market's crammed at a cheap rate? 'Virtue,' and 'filial love,' and 'spotless honor,' are very pretty epithets; but then, like *Rosalind's* husband, they are *too good* to be had every day; we know they jingle very well from the swelling, spangled, reputation's champion; but 'virtue,' 'virtue,' '*toujours perdrix*,' the most delicate stomach at last may yearn at milk and water and gruel unadulterated. '*Antigone*' is such a vehicle as we might expect Rowland Hill or Wesley to drive through a contaminated neighbourhood, industriously running over the devil in highways and byeways; and had it not been for one or two tragedy passengers behind, who favored us now and then with an opportunity of laughing, we should have sat as grave as Gog or Magog, or Black Charles at Charing Cross. Striking comparisons, (which, in order to be made use of, had been tried fifty times before) such as 'an ungrateful man being a sort of human boa constrictor,' and a 'young virgin' was 'an opening rose,' and 'as pure as snow,' and 'as chaste as heaven,' with an hundred more little fancies, not to name Shakspeare improved in divers places, were intolerably frequent.

We must find *Antigone* (Miss KIMBELL) guilty of misusing the king's *articles*, with other parts of speech, the property of this realm:—she seems particularly attached to *short-cut*. It is a vile taste, Miss KIMBELL; men's hearts are not to be gained by an elongated visage, a protruded lip, and intonation as high and low 'as hell's from heaven;' a tragedy heroine should not imitate the whine of a solicitous match-girl, and 'dear, dear *Hacrnan*,' should not be the response of 'buy another

ha'p'orth, ma'am.' One thing however, we must allow, when Miss K. laughed, she certainly endowed the audience with the same feeling. This young lady cannot be the Melpomene of the Surrey, however the visitors of Rawstorne Street Private Theatre may have flattered her. Mr. H. KEMBLE, as *Eteocles*, was forcible and correct; he gave as much consequence to the tyrant as his flimsiness would allow, and starched him up into something regal. We beg leave to inform our readers, that Mr. WATKINS BURROUGHS, as *Haernan*, wears his hair *à là Brute*. We know we we run the hazard of difference of opinion with many *fair* Surrey critics in advancing any thing in advice to Mr. W. B; but his first appearance as *Haernan* bespeaks the late 'awful preparation' of curling-tongs and hare's-foot, with the prefatory gathering up at the first entrance, expressing 'Now, I'm sure of ye,'—and on the actor comes. For our parts, we like to hear and see the man act; we like the bluff cavalier, and not the '*carpet knight*.' In walking gentlemen Mr. BURROUGHS is very respectable; and we have seen him in other parts with some pleasure; but we admire to hear sentiment declaimed, not disgorged: we wish to see a hero in valour's position, and not to be remembered of an indisposed landsman in a Margate-hoy. A twist of the hair is not exactly madness, nor a folding of the arms, meditation. A Mr. HODSON, as *Creon*, troubles the wardrobe keeper for a dress in this piece. For our part, until he spoke, we thought we recognized in him an old *fixed* favourite of Mr. Vickery, Hair-dresser, Tavistock-street. Mr. GALLOT was so clever in *Polynices* as to unite the cobler with the prince: one at a time, Mr. G. if you please. A Mr. AULD's vigorous attempts for combat were very *game*. A bantam cock spurred and combed! The decorations of this piece are as far above praise as they are unworthy of their present devotion.

The 'Foulahs,' a most interesting melodrama, followed, of which we can say no more than that SMITH is most effective, and Mrs. BARRYMORE, as usual, engaging. The business has been highly flattering, and we have no doubt if such affairs as *Antigone* are heard no more of, that the Surrey will be itself again. We wish Mr. WILLIAMS every success: his efforts merit it.

DAVIS'S AMPHITHEATRE.

This theatre has been well attended since our last notice:—the evenings have been chiefly devoted to the benefits of the respective actors. Mr. DAVIS, the proprietor, had his night on Monday se'nnight, on which evening the house was crowded in every part with a very genteel company. The theatre closed on Friday last, after a very profitable season.—Mr. DAVIDGE delivered the following address:—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.—This being the last night of the season, the proprietor of the Royal Amphitheatre deputes me to present you his most grateful thanks for your liberal patronage. Language is frequently found inadequate to the full expression of powerful feeling, and modest acknowledgment is generally conceived the best proof of sincerity. Under this impression he bids me simply say that he thanks you most heartily; and will endeavour to evince his sense of your kindness by his future zeal in your service.

In the name of my associates I next stand forward, and the heart knows not

a more pleasing moment than that in which it can give vent to the genuine feelings of gratitude for favours liberally bestowed. Much have we to thank you for;—much DO we thank you. During the inclement weather we have had—your smiles have been to us as sun-shine, and your plaudits as invigorating breezes: to say that we will endeavour to deserve your kindness would be superfluous, for those who 'live to please,' *must please* to live. Ladies and Gentlemen, we most respectfully take our leave of you till Easter Monday next, with the most heartfelt wishes for your prosperity and happiness, and the humble hope that, whenever we appear before you, your usual encouragement will be our animating principle, while our predominent ambition, rely on it, will be to endeavour to deserve it.

ROYAL COBURG.

A new melo-drama, translated from the French, by Mr. MILNER, called the *Jew*, has been produced here. The chief incident upon which the piece is founded is of a highly interesting character, and the plot is as follows:—

The Paris diligence, on its way to Orleans, breaks down, and the passengers are compelled to stop at a village inn. Among the passengers is a rich Jew, *Isaac Samuels* (JACOBSON), and *Lucette*, a young milliner (Mrs. YOUNG), the latter of whom is in love with *Charles*, a young soldier (HAINES), son of the landlady of the inn (Mrs. WESTON). *Lucette* having become possessed of a little property, boasts of it before the other passengers. At midnight the inn is attacked by robbers, who plunder all its inhabitants: but *Lucette*, who would have escaped but for the apparent villainy of the Jew, who informs the banditti of her being possessed of money. All are disgusted with his treachery, when, in the sequel, it turns out that he has so acted to protect himself from robbery, having an immense sum of money at the time about his person.

By this brief sketch, it will be seen that this drama is founded upon a fact, which occurred some years ago in this country we believe: the interest is well kept up, and the acting is very good.

Thalaba the Destroyer continues to attract crowds at half-price.—The scenery is particularly splendid; and the performance of Miss EDMISTON is such as deserves a higher sphere for its exercise.

SADLER'S WELLS.

Nothing new has occurred at this house, if we except an interlude, called '*Mrs. Veal's Ghost*,' which, even the gallery yawned at for twelve nights, and then was heard no more. We must not, however, forget to name 'the manager's last kick,' sending up a balloon which contained—would you believe it—twelve free admissions, and as many penny trumpets.—We would advise the manager to have 'a lucky bag' on the stage, in order that fair play may be observed with the strong and the weak,—because, in the *scrambling*, the brickmakers may be nearly certain of getting—A PRIZE!

VAUXHALL GARDENS.

The fineness of the weather has induced the proprietors to extend the usual period of the season for three or four weeks. We are glad to find, that since this determination, the Gardens have been well attended. The new Venetian Ballet, in which some graceful dancing is exhibited, is very attractive, and deservedly applauded. The Fireworks, on the evening we were present, (Wednesday) were particularly fine; and a numerous and fashionable company expressed by their looks the pleasure experienced at this delightful place of amusement.

BERWICK-STREET, PRIVATE THEATRE.

We attended this Theatre on Friday last, to witness the performance of the *West Indian*. The entertainment commenced with a mortifying apology for the gentleman announced to play *Belcour*, who was prevented from appearing by "sudden and severe indisposition," whether arising from fear or otherwise we are not informed. Knowing the *little liberties* sometimes taken by these gentleman amateurs, we expected to have a new version of the old joke. Richard the Third, without the Duke of Gloster; but fortunately, "one of the profession," as the apologist told us, "kindly consented to read the part;"—so much the better thought we.—A part *well read* is infinitely better than one badly acted; but, alas! this consolation was but transitory, for it turned out to be a *new* reading indeed; in the place of judgment and good emphasis we were *favoured* with mis-pronounciation, and blunders innumerable. If this *locum tenens* be really in the profession, we are inclined to think the profits of "his vocation," will never much encumber his treasury—The *Major O'Flaherty* of Mr. WALLER was played with some talent, although occasionally he forgot that a brogue was a necessary accompaniment of stage Irishmen. STOCKWELL was very well:—the same may be said of FARLAND—*Charles*, and *Captain Dudley*, were just passable. *Lady Rusport* was not only "dead perfect," but played uncommonly well. *Charlotte* was awkward, affected, and very ugly, and "many a time and oft" referring to the book to refresh the *lapsus* of her memory. On this evening there was no after-piece:—a judicious arrangement, which enabled us to seek "our downy pillows" some time before midnight.

Original Poetry.

LINES.

Supposed to be addressed by the QUEEN OF SCOTS to her Secretary CHATELAR.

Once more that pensive air, unwonted thrillings
Creep round my heart strings, and my breathing check—
The pleasure trembles on the verge of pain.
How strangely link'd our senses with the soul,
Centre of harmony, to whom its shrine, this frame
Bears willing service. Sure, then, spirits live
In ceaseless melodies; and e'en on earth
Love, of our choice feelings the great master key,
Sways absolute, when with honied drops
Of opiate sounds it lulls the steeped soul
In soft delirium, thraldom one would fain
Should hold for ever, so to dream in Heaven.
Again, again! Let my fond eye still draw
From thine o'erbarg'd, as sunbeams from the sea,
And drink to madness! With what new ease
Thy love-taught fingerings bid the chords discourse:
The very air is sweetened, as it joys
To waft the burden. Believe me, I'd not flatter thee,
But thy angel form Apollo's self might envy,
That wants no posture—master's pedant rules,
Feels all the soothing influence, and most gracefully
Spontaneous suits it to thy melting strains.
I'll gaze no more; my giddy reason swims,
And yet, I'd think, it is no sin to love.

N. B. It will not be forgotten, that Mary was accomplished as well as beautiful and feeling. See SMOLLET.

A. B.

Theatrical Chit Chat.

DECLINE OF THE DRAMA.

We regret to hear, from a respected correspondent at Plymouth, that, in consequence of the want of patronage of the public of that town to the theatre, BRUNTON, the manager, is about to relinquish his undertaking. Some of the most respectable inhabitants (at the head of whom is the Earl of MORLEY) have however called a public meeting on the

subject, for the purpose of taking into consideration the circumstances, and to adopt some means to support Mr. B. in his speculation. Our friend very justly adds:—"If the inhabitants of Plymouth really feel regret, why call a public meeting, when they hold the success or failure of the concern in their own hands? Is it not absurd to suppose, that a manager (no matter whether of a Plymouth or of any other theatre, I speak generally) can keep pace with the public wish, without the public support?—or that he can afford to pay £30 or £40 a night for the engagement of a first-rate performer, and not have £20 in the house?—numerous instances of which can be quoted: the very idea is ridiculous! The drama furnishes to individuals a source of rational amusement and improvement; the moral and intellectual advantages resulting from it are great, and as such certainly claims our support.

Another cause may be urged, and which our friend seems to have lost sight of, for the apathy of the inhabitants of this town to theatricals. Like all seaport towns in time of peace, Plymouth has not one-tenth of its population which in war-time crowd its streets. Sailors are rare friends to the drama; for, though they do not at all times understand what is said on the stage, yet they freely spend their rhino, and that answers the same purpose. We sincerely hope the meeting will not separate without doing something effectual.

Mr. ARNOLD, with a feeling of liberality that does him honor, has, we understand, offered the use of his theatre to poor old DAVY, the Composer, who is in a pitiable state of helplessness and poverty:—his benefit will take place in a few weeks. Many of the first vocalists of the day have already tendered their services, and we sincerely hope it will be a bumper.

The hundred tongues of rumour communicate the important fact, that there are to be *seven*, absolutely seven, Managers of Drury-Lane for the ensuing Season, viz. Messrs. ELLISTON—T. DIBDIN—BUNN, TERRY, WALLACK, W. BARRYMORE, and REYNOLDS, What may we not expect from a combination of *such talent*?

SOUTHAMPTON.

Our Theatre says a correspondent, has been tolerably well attended during the past week. On Monday, in *Venice Preserved*, COOKE, as *Jaffier*, was very successful; and MATTHEWS, as *Pierre*. proved a good representative of the brave, frank, yet desperate soldier. Mrs. HAMBLYN'S *Belvidera* was a chaste performance.—On Wednesday evening *Therese* was produced, in which COOKE and MATTHEWS again elicited deserved applause.—On Friday the serious play of *The Exile* was performed, and well supported throughout. The melo-drame of *The Broken Sword* followed, in which the performers went through the parts assigned them with credit to themselves and satisfaction to the audience.—I perceive, by the play-bills, that the spirited Proprietors of our Theatre have engaged for a few nights, that universally admired actor, Mr. FARREN, of Covent-Garden Theatre, whose correct delineation of character has rendered him most deservedly a very great favourite on the London boards. I venture to predict, that he will prove equally attractive here; and that the public will avail themselves of the opportunity afforded them by the managers of enjoying a representation of real sterling talent, and thereby make a return for the liberality they have evinced, during the present season, by catering for theatrical palates the choicest dishes of Metropolitan production.

BIRMINGHAM.—The provincial critics are quite enraptured with Miss HAMMERSLEY, who has been playing all sorts of characters, and singing every thing, from the 'Soldier tir'd,' to 'Moll in the Wad,' with astonishing effect and skill. For our own parts, we saw this lady at the Adelphi, last season; but, heaven help our poor uncultivated taste! we could never discover any thing so very wonderful in her singing.—Local partiality we know goes a great way; but we did not expect it would extend quite *so far*.

The Tragedy of *Brutus* has been well got up, in which a Mr. SALTER played (says our informant) *Lucius Junius* with great feeling and energy. HOOPER, late of the West London, is playing in JONES'S line with credit to himself and satisfaction to the Manager.—Mrs. WAYLETT is likewise a great favourite, and the Company can boast of possessing many valuable performers.

BRITISH MUSEUM
4
NOV
55

J. Findlay.

Mr. TERRY as ADMIRAL FRANKLIN,
in
'Sweethearts and Wives.'

Engraved for the Mirror of the Stage.